

**Technology Panel Abstracts:
Meeting the needs of professionals**

**National Extension Family Life
Specialists Pre-Conference at the
NCFR annual conference**

**November 7, 2006
Minneapolis, MN**

Title: Lessons Learned – Developing an Online Research Update

Authors: Jodi Dworkin, Assistant Professor, Dept of Family Social Science & University of Minnesota Extension Service, University of Minnesota

Colleen Gengler, Family Relations Educator, University of Minnesota Extension Service

Kathleen Olson, Family Relations Educator, University of Minnesota Extension Service

Description of presentation:

Organizations working with families are experiencing budget cuts and staff members are asked to take on more responsibilities with less support. Professionals crave research yet access to journal articles and having time to sort through them can be overwhelming. To increase support, University of Minnesota Extension Family Relations staff offer a model for providing professional development opportunities. In this presentation, we highlight the research update, “What’s New with Teens and Their Families” which explores current research on: 1) normative adolescent development and what that means for parent-adolescent relationships and 2) the bi-directional relationship between teens and their larger family system. The research update evolved from an initial face to face three hour format reaching 165 professionals (2004-2005) to an online pilot with 20 individuals (early 2006) to an online non-credit course reaching over 115 professionals in MN and nationwide the first time it was offered midyear 2006. The online format allows professionals to participate from their office or home when convenient saving time, travel and subsistence costs. During the face to face course and the pilot we explored participants’ interest in and preference for taking an online course for professional development. We then utilized our learnings about content, cost, length and need for CEUs to develop the online course. We will discuss the development process, how we adapted the content from the original face to face format into online delivery (pedagogy of online teaching and learning), evaluation of different formats, what we continue to learn and future steps.

Primary Contact Person:

Jodi Dworkin

Email: jdworkin@umn.edu

Phone: 612-624-3732

Fax: 612-625-4227

Title: Reaching Family Life Professionals On-line: Best Practices From the Evolution of the Family Life E-Seminar

Author: Ted G. Futris, Assistant Professor and Extension Family Life Specialist
The University of Georgia

Description of presentation:

Extension Educators' effectiveness in the field is enhanced by the desire and practice of keeping current in the research related to their work. Many, if not most, rely on conference attendance to learn first-hand from researchers in their field. This, however, is often quite costly, and exchange with the researcher is usually in the form of a didactic presentation, rather than dialogue and discussion.

The Family Life Electronic Seminars (e-seminar) was designed with the intent to connect educators in the field with top researchers and practitioners in a selected programmatic area in direct dialogue to promote up-to-date knowledge, discussion of issues, and agreement on practical application. Since 2001, over 400 family life professionals (nearly 75% Extension) have participated in at least one of five e-seminars. Each year nearly all of those participating have been satisfied with this on-line experience and reported that e-seminar helped them better understand the topic area, provided them with new ideas, stimulated them in wanting to learn more, and that they will likely use the information learned.

The e-seminar has utilized diverse strategies to deliver research-based information (e.g., papers, research articles, audio presentations) and to foster programmatic discourse (i.e., discussion board over varied lengths of time). Feedback shared from each year's e-seminar participants, coupled with pedagogical perspectives on effective teaching and learning, has yielded informative guidelines and strategies for the successful delivery of future on-line trainings to Extension and other family life professionals. This presentation will review these strategies within the context of these prior experiences.

Primary Contact Person:

Ted Futris

Email: tfutris@uga.edu

Phone: 706-542-7566

Fax: 706-542-1799

Title: *Partnering with Parents Online*, an in-depth training series for parenting educators

Author: Kimberly Greder, Assistant Professor and Family Life Extension State Specialist, Iowa State University

Description of presentation:

Partnering with Parents (PWP) Online consists of 11 Web based modules, each covered over a two week period, and is designed to strengthen the core competencies of parenting educators. Chat sessions, discussion boards, eJournals, videostreams, surveys, small group discussions, short readings, surveys and quizzes are tools used to enhance learning. The online training has been offered three times (2004, 2005, 2006), reached approximately 120 learners and incorporates both NEPEM and NEPEF.

The complete online version (120 learners) was developed from the original hybrid (face to face and online, 173 learners) version that began in 2002. Together they reached 293 learners. Evaluation data has been compiled and published for the hybrid version and is underway for the complete online version.

Input was sought from selected HDFS faculty, campus and field extension staff in Iowa and other states, and parenting educators throughout Iowa to develop PWP. During 2003, the curriculum was peer reviewed by seven extension specialists and faculty in other states. Comments from peer reviewers, learners, and co-facilitators were incorporated into the November 2005 revised curriculum.

Evaluation data were collected via learner online discussion boards, self-assessments, written reflections, follow-up surveys, and in-depth interviews, as well as via facilitator reflection notes and a focus group. A summary of the evaluation findings was published in a peer-reviewed journal listed below.

Greder, K. (2004). Iowa curriculum strengthens core competencies of parenting educators, *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*, 96(4).

Participants gained information and developed skills that they could immediately use in their work with families. Data from 2002 indicates the majority (94%, $n = 31$) of participants would recommend *PWP* to others, and 95% of the participants ($n = 27$; 73% response rate) believed they were competent or very competent in facilitating parenting education after the academy as compared to 32% before the academy.

Primary Contact Person:

Kimberly Greder

Email: kgreder@iastate.edu

Phone: 515-294-5906

Fax: 515-294-5507